

RiverCulture Steering Committee  
April 30, 2020 6pm via GoToMeetings  
-Votes May be Taken-  
**MINUTES**

Present from the Town: Suzanne LoManto, Walter Ramsey  
Steering Committee Members: Rachel Teumim, Lilith Wolinsky, Eileen Dowd (Chair), Kristi Bodin  
Absent: Tammy Ketcham

Meeting was Opened at 6:06pm

**1.) Approve the meeting minutes of 2/27/20/ Approve the 2020 RiverCulture Annual Report**  
The RiverCulture 2020 report was accidentally not attached or posted. *Votes were not taken.*

*SL discusses her activity in the previous two months, in light of COVID-19.*

**2.) Development of the Liability Plan REPORT**

The report synthesizes the community input from the 2/1/20 meeting at the Discovery Center. WR sent an email with the report to participating community members in mid-April. The report is available on the T.O.M. website, Department of Planning and Conservation.

**3.) Development of a Montague Mural Policy:** The Steering Committee reviewed a draft of the Montague Mural Policy. The idea of the policy is strike a balance between the rights of private landowners and the interests of the public and the Town. The policy divides all murals into two groups, independent projects and murals looking for RiverCulture support. SL briefly discusses the difference in the application process for these two groups. Eileen would like to participate in upcoming conversation. Kristi will review all language for clarity, especially from a legal standpoint.

*SL discusses RiverCulture Upcoming Programming in light of COVID-19*

**News from the Shea Theater- What to Expect at the Venue.**

SL reports bleak news from the Shea Theater: Nearly all live performances have been cancelled, and it is expected that fall events will also be cancelled, as well. They have started a partnership with other regional venues for a “Quarantues” at-home series. RiverCulture will work to promote those events.

**NEW 2020 Emphasis on Outdoor**

Farmers Market, Summer Park Series, Montague Soap Box Races, Temporary Mural Micro-Grants

RiverCulture will need to more planning attention to upcoming activities happening outdoor. SL is working closely with the Montague BoH and Annie Levine on the Wednesday Farmers market. Special emphasis will be placed on creating a safe/fun public environment, and getting SNAP/HIP benefits to local residents. Rachel suggested that RiverCulture work reach out to the local cultural council which has also had their programming cancelled.

RiverCulture is also working with Jon Dobosz (Montague Parks and Rec) on a Summer Movie Series and the Soap Box derby, although all agree that it is 50-50% whether these events will happen.

SL reports a disconcerting lack of participation from the TF Cultural District. Several emails by the RC director went unanswered. One exception was the response of a downtown shop owner who pleaded with RiverCulture to consider practical projects that respond to community survival rather than a temporary mural project. After much thought and some additional communication it is clear that the Cultural District needs to “pause” their efforts. This was communicated by SL to the MCC.

The pros/cons of a temporary mural project were discussed by the group. Lilith suggested that a mural could safely be painted by a group of people took turns working. Another idea is that the murals all address an inspiring community theme. The old Cumberland Farms building was cited as a place to start the program. SL imagines from \$2,000-\$3,000 would be used, if this idea moved forward.

*Lilith asks how downtown businesses are doing?*

WR responds that it is a mixed-bag. Some have received PPP benefits. 4 or 5 business owners have reached out to him, showing interest in downtown improvements/ a business sign program.

WR gives an update on the Town’s efforts to partner with Greenfield and Buckland-Shelburne on an economic assistance program using Block Grant funds. Hopefully, business applications will be available within two weeks. SL hopes that once this assistance program is activated that Cultural District stakeholders will want meet and talk about ideas.

### **RiverCulture Website Refresh**

RC spent two days updating the website. The new design has eliminated the calendar but more strongly features restaurants, on-line entertainment, and COVID-19 response information.

Submitted by Suzanne LoManto

Signed:

Eileen Dowd (chair) date